

Message Text

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21

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 OMB-01 AID-20 IO-14 ACDA-19 EB-11 COME-00

TRSE-00 EUR-25 DRC-01 /184 W
----- 030443

R 250930Z JUN 74

FM AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2028

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOGADISCIO 0992

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, ET, SO, US

SUBJECT: SIAD'S COMMENTS ON ETHIOPIAN-SOMALI RELATIONS

REF: A. MOGADISCIO 0758, B. MOGADISCIO 0761, C. MOGADISCIO 0839

1. SUMMARY: PRESIDENT SIAD, DURING MY JUNE 24 CALL ON HIM, REASSERTED SOMALIA'S PEACEFUL INTENTIONS VIS-A-VIS ETHIOPIA AND CLAIMED HE HAD INSTRUCTED SOMALI ARMED FORCES TO WITHDRAW IN FACE OF RECENT ETHIOPIAN BORDER "PROVOCATIONS" (SEE REFS). HE PRAISED PRESIDENT NIXON'S FOREIGN POLICY, PARTICULARLY IN MIDDLE EAST AND SAID US COULD MAKE FURTHER CONTRIBUTION TO WORLD PEACE BY CONVINCING ETHIOPIA TO GIVE UP OGADEN. END SUMMARY.

2. I OPENED DISCUSSION OF ETHIOPIAN QUESTION BY EXPRESSING APPRECIATION FOR CORRECT POSTURE WHICH SOMALI INFORMATION MEDIA HAD MAINTAINED DURING PERIOD OF DISTURBANCES IN ETHIOPIA. SIAD SAID SOMALIS AND ETHIOPIANS ARE "BROTHERS", MUST LIVE TOGETHER IN PEACE, AND SHOULD EVENTUALLY BE ONE POLLITICAL ENTITY. SOMALIA HAD SHOWN GREAT RESTRAINT, NOT ONLY IN NATURE OF ITS OWN ACTIVITIES, BUT ALSO IN FACE OF THE ETHIOPIAN PROVOCATIONS. FIRST WAS VIOLATION OF DE FACTO ADMINISTRATIVE LINE BY GROUP ALLEGEDLY SEARCHING FOR OIL; GROUP INCLUDED WHITE MEN WHO SOME
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SAID WERE AMERICAN (REFS A & B) - I DENIED ANY AMERICANS HAD BEEN

INVOLVED. SIAD HAD INSTRUCTED HIS FORCES TO ALLOW PARTY TO PROCEED, SAYING THEY WOULD DEPART SOMALI TERRITORY ON THEIR OWN IN DUE COURSE. IN SECOND INCIDENT (REF C), TWO DAYS BEFORE SUMMIT, ETHIOPIAN OFFICERS HAD INSISTED THAT SOMALIS VACATE WITHIN SIX HOURS LONG-TIME SOMALI SETTLEMENT, COMPLETE WITH POLICE STATION AND ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDINGS. ETHIOPIANS HAD BROUGHT UP "BATTALION" OF TROOPS AND FIRED ON SOMALIS. SIAD TOLD HIS PEOPLE TO EVACUATE THIS SETTLEMENT, EVEN THOUGH HE KNEW THEY WOULD FEEL GOVERNMENT HAD BETRAYED THEM. THEY HAD HAD TO LEAVE ALL THEIR PROPERTY BEHIND. SIAD HAD TOLD EMPEROR ABOUT THESE INCIDENTS DURING HIS JUNE 20 CONVERSATION WITH HIM. EMPEROR SAID HE WAS NOT RPT NGT INFORMED AND FONMIN SAID INFORMATION REACHING HIM HAD BEEN INCOMPLETE AND PARTIALLY ERRONEOUS. SIAD WONDERED ALOUD WHY IEG WOULD NOT BE AS FULLY AND PROMPTLY INFORMED OF SUCH INCIDENTS AS SIAD HIMSELF.

3. SIAD THEN LAUNCHED INTO DISCUSSION OF "REMARKABLE" THINGS PRESIDENT NIXON HAD DONE FOR WORLD PEACE. HE NOTED INTERNAL US MATTERS WERE NOT RPT NOT HIS BUSINESS BUT HE COULD NOT RPT NOT HELP SAYING THAT THOSE WHO CRITICIZE PRESIDENT ON WATERGATE WERE DOING WORLD AND US A DISSERVICE. HE SAID US HAD MADE PARTICULARLY FINE CONTRIBUTION IN MIDDLE EAST; HAD STARTED ON PATH TO PEACE IN VIET-NAM AND SHOULD COMPLETE IT; AND SHOULD THEN USE ITS INFLUENCE TO HELP BRING INDEPENDENCE TO PORTUGUESE COLONIES. US SHOULD HELP THOSE "WHO LEAST EXPECT IT". (I HAD IMPRESSION HE WAS HINTING AT SOMALIS AS ONE POSSIBLE CANDIDATE FOR SUCH POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE.) THERE WAS THEN BRIEF DISCUSSION ON THESE POINTS, DURING WHICH I EMPHASIZED CONTINUING NORTH VIETNAMESE PRESENCE IN SOUTH AND OUR SUPPORT FOR NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN PORTUGUESE AND LIBERATION MOVEMENTS.

4. SIAD THEN ASKED WHY US DID NOT CONTINUE ITS CONTRIBUTION TO WORLD PEACE BY HELPING ACHIEVE SETTLEMENT OF SOMALI-ETHIOPIAN DISPUTE. I ASKED HOW HE FELT WE SHOULD DO THIS. HE SAID "BY PERSUADING ETHIOPIA TO GIVE UP THE OGADEN." I OBSERVED THAT US WANTED PEACE IN THE HORN AND EMPHASIZED NON-AGGRESSIVE NATURE OF OUR ASSISTANCE TO ETHIOPIA. I SAID IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO CONVINCE ANY COUNTRY TO GIVE UP 30 PERCENT OF ITS TERRITORY AND I NOTED THAT US MEDIATION COULD ONLY BE SUCCESSFUL WHEN BOTH SIDES TO GIVEN DISPUTE WERE READY TO RESOLVE IT. I DOUBTED IF SECRETARY KISSINGER COULD HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN MIDDLE EAST A YEAR AGO, FOR INSTANCE.

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SIAD SAID HE HAD TOLD EMPEROR AND HIS ADVISORS THAT OGADEN WAS OF NO VALUE TO ETHIOPIA. IT WAS POOR AREA; ITS RETENTION IN EMPIRE REQUIRED CONTINUED EXPENDITURE OF AMHARA BLOOD AND MONEY; AMHARAS THEMSELVES WOULD NEVER WANT TO LIVE THERE. OGADEN WOULD BE ECONOMIC LIABILITY FOR SOMALIA ALSO, BUT IT MUST BE PART OF SOMALIA FOR "MORAL" REASONS. USG SHOULD UNDERSTAND THIS POINT AND CONVINCE ETHIOPIANS OF IT. IF, IN THE COURSE OF ITS MEDIATION, US SHOULD DECIDE SOMALIA AT FAULT, IT SHOULD "PRESSURE" GSDR. US WAS

GREAT POWER WHICH NO COUNTRY COULD IGNORE.

5. SIAD SAID IN CONCLUSION THAT HE HAD TOLD EMPEROR THAT BOTH OF THEM WERE "OLD MEN" WHO SHOULD RESOLVE DISPUTE BETWEEN THEIR COUNTRIES; THEY SHOULD NOT LEAVE IT FOR THEIR CHILDREN. I NOTED THAT ETHIOPIANS OFTEN EXPRESSED CONCERN TO US THAT SOMALIS MIGHT RESOLVE THIS DISPUTE BY WARFARE. SIAD SAID "WAR IS NO GOOD FOR ANYBODY" AND THAT THIS WAS NOT RPT NOT GSDR INTENTION.

6. COMMENT: SIAD, WHO AT BEGINNING OF MY MEETING TOLD ME HE "TOOK SERIOUSLY" HIS POSITION AS OAU CHAIRMAN, DISCOURSED AT MORE LENGTH ON WORLD AFFAIRS THAN IN MY PREVIOUS DISCUSSION WITH HIM. HE QUICKLY REVERTED HOWEVER TO FOCUS ON ETHIOPIA. HIS REQUEST FOR AMERICAN HELP IN RESOLVING THAT DISPUTE ECHOES EARLIER COMMENTS BY GSDR PRERSONALITIES, BUT CAMEOUT SOMEWHAT MORE DIRECTLY THAN SIAD HAS HIMSELF DONE WITH ME IN PAST. HIS RESPECT FOR US POWER AND INFLUENCE THROUGHOUT WORLD WAS MORE EVIDENT THAN IN PAST. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN MIDDLE EAST ARE PROBABLY PRINCIPAL CAUSE OF THIS. IT IS THIS FEELING WHICH IS PROBABLY KEY TO HIS CONTINUING DESIRE FOR GOOD RELATIONS WITH US.
KIRK

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, BORDER INCIDENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 25 JUN 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CollinP0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974MOGADI00992
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740167-1221
From: MOGADISCIO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740616/aaaaanln.tel
Line Count: 136
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: A. MOGADISCIO 0758, B. MOGADISCIO 07, 61, C. MOGADISCIO 0839
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CollinP0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03 SEP 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <03 SEP 2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <21 FEB 2003 by CollinP0>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SIAD'S COMMENTS ON ETHIOPIAN-SOMALI RELATIONS
TAGS: PBOR, PFOR, ET, SO, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005